Senator David Durenberger
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

5/17/84

Dear Senator,

Your letter of the 10th again indicates that we are in substantial agreement, certainly in our hopes for Central America. I've thought most of the day about responding because I do not want to waste your time and, respectfully in some areas of disagreement, I've decided to ask you to think from another side on your given sets of facts.

Perhaps basic, because I am without question about your intentions, is the fact that you think as a Norte Americano, not as a Nicaraguan. You also disregard the most serious current underlying cause, our intervention, and reaction to it. And in spite of the considerable amount of time you've taken to learn what is going on there, you forget the history and experiences on which these people draw and in terms of which they react.

Most sincere and concerned Americans will interpret the "Pastoral Letter on Reconcilliation" exactly as you do. In reading it I've marked seven passages that, in Nicaraguan terms, justify their complaints. The present government, I am certain, interprets that letter as a demand for its abdication. For one example, how would you as in that government react to the charge that it is "dishonest" to blame "foreign agression" for any of their troubles? Is there any question at all? Have not our efforts to ruin them economically and our military efforts against them limited their choices and caused much if not most of the present troubles?

You say that "Honduras does face a significant threat from Nicaragua." Isn't it the fact that Honduras is the major sanctuary and staging ground for all the attacks on Nicaragua? If you were the Nicaraguan government would you ignore that and grant your enemies total immunity? How else would or could you fight back, defend yourself? And would you not with any other country doing the same thing? Is there any other way you could hope to survive?

We'll never know what would have developed in Nicaragua simply because we drove them the way they've gone by giving them no real alternatives.

And do you really think that Nicaragua has been as much involved in destabilization Honduras as Honduras has been in destabilizing Nicaragua?

It accomplishes nothing constructive in that area for us to make them look good and as our victims, which is what our polciies and acts have done. Witness the speech of the President of Mexico, anything but a radical.

There is no possibility of any lasting solution until all intervention ends and these people are given time to work out their own destiny. No country will invade any other, so help ought not include any more military equipment of any kind. They need economic help and a shining example. Meanwhile, there also is no possibility that Nicaragua can over throw the governments of any of its neighbors. If they leave Nicaragua alone, it has what is more important to it than bothering them.

My fear is that the longer we persist in our present policies the more they will be driven to extremes. And the longer it will require for them to even want to turn to a genuinely representative society.

You refer to the Popes visit and the heckling, but have you forgotten his condemnation of the priests who were democratic and sught to help undo the effects of the long dictatorship and turn the people toward democracy? They also are condemned in the pastoral letter. I do not think either denunciation is at all helpful and I believe that in the end both will be counterproductive. ... We must live by and practise our traditional beliefs and abandon our dominating paranoia or we fail.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.